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SIPDIS

USAID/W FOR AFR/WA, MIKE KARBELING
OES/IHA
USAID/W FOR AFR/SD, SNWANKWO
USAID/W FOR AFR/SD, SMOTEN
USAID/W FOR AFR/EA, DSHELDON
USAID/W FOR AFR/WA, HPROCTOR
USAID/W FOR AFR/SA, PFLEURET
USAID/W FOR AFR/SD/ED, CFEEZEL

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: NIGERIA: AMBASSADORS GIRLS' SCHOLARSHIP
PROGRAM OF THE AFRICA EDUCATION INITIATIVE (AEI)

REF: STATE 111151, 182108Z

[1](#)1. This is a reply to the action cable STATE 111151

[1](#)2. The Nigerian Mission applauds the laudable work AFR/SD/ED has accomplished in the promotion of girls education across Africa through the Ambassadors' Girls Scholarship Program (AGSP), implemented through the Education for Development and Democracy Initiative (EDDI). We look forward to the expansion of this unique scholarship program under the Africa Education Initiative (AEI), which will support retention of girls in school through awarding 250,000 primary level scholarships, and where possible, complementary mentoring programs to inspire and encourage girls in their educational pursuits.

[1](#)3. Based on information requested under paragraph 3 of your cable, find below the USAID/Nigeria response:

LOCAL CONTEXT FOR IMPLEMENTATION (INCLUDING
LINKAGES TO OTHER PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES):

Nigeria is a nation of 135 million people. It is estimated that females constitute 51% of the population, with an adult female literacy rate of about 47%. As the most populous nation in Africa, one of every five Africans is a Nigerian. The average income in Nigeria is very low (US\$300 - \$350 in 2000), with the number of people living below the poverty line estimated at 60-70%. Families do not have much, if any, discretionary funds. Often education of the girl child suffers under these economic conditions. Only 65% of girls enrolled in primary schools complete this level of education, with only 45% of these girls proceeding to Junior Secondary School.

In Nigeria the HIV/AIDS prevalence according to a 2003 national seroprevalence survey is 5 percent, with over 4 million people infected with HIV/AIDS. The 2003 results indicates that young people, particularly women in the 15-24 years age group, remain the most vulnerable to infection. The large numbers of infected persons make the case for intensifying prevention efforts. The government plans to empower girls and women to develop the knowledge and skills that protect them from HIV-infection. This scholarship program will assist in the realization of this plan, because it focuses on assisting girls to become educated and better informed, with women playing mentoring and decision making roles that affect the education of their children. The program's emphasis on the need for community participation provides a timely and much desired linkage with the Mission's Social Sector Services procurement which focuses (in addition to other issues) on community participation in Education for ownership and leveraging of resources. The scholarship program will also assist the Mission to achieve its global vision of having gender as a cross-cutting theme in all our activities, due to the fact that it focuses on the girl child and promotes the involvement of women role models as mentors for the scholarship beneficiaries. The scholarship program would also complement USAID/Nigeria efforts at increasing access and completion of qualitative primary school with specific emphasis on girls' education.

THE LOCAL SCHOOL CALENDAR:

The local school calendar year runs from September to July of each year.

NUMBER AND LEVEL(S) OF POTENTIAL SCHOLARS:

The scholarship will pay for 2,500 girls (less than 1% of the current estimate of girls in primary school in Nigeria) to assist them in the completion of last two years of primary school, which is grade five and six, and the continuance of their pursuit of education through Junior Secondary School, which is grades seven through nine, for a total of five years of Basic Education. According to current statistics, about 20 million children attend primary schools in Nigeria. Of this number, only about 3 million transit to Junior Secondary School. The purpose of this scholarship is to encourage more girls to stay in school and transit into, and complete, Junior Secondary School in Nigeria.

CONSTITUTION OF THE SCHOLARSHIP PACKAGE (WHAT WILL THE SCHOLARSHIP PAY FOR):

The scholarship will pay for cost of tuition, incidentals and boarding.

OUTLINE THE APPROXIMATE COST OF A SCHOLARSHIP PER GIRL:

We anticipate offering 2,500 scholarships.

- The approximate cost of scholarship per girl is \$900 x 5 years = \$4,500, for a total cost of \$11,250,000.
 - Under mentoring support, we anticipate 250 mentors (1 mentor per 10 girls) x \$150 per year x 5 years = \$187,500.
 - Annual mentor workshops: 250 x \$100 per participant x 5 years = \$125,000.
- Grand Total cost: \$11,562,500.

SUGGEST SELECTION CRITERIA FOR SCHOLARS:

As in our current program, the proposed program will focus on girls in the most disadvantaged circumstances, those who otherwise would have no support, no safety net and little prospect for a good education. Categories include girls who are orphaned (especially HIV/AIDS orphans), living with physical disabilities (e.g., polio victims, the blind and deaf) and those among the poorest of the poor. Selection committees will be established in each state to identify qualified scholarship candidates. Committees will be comprised of private sector corporate representatives, NGO and CBO representatives, as well as local educators, community leaders and participating school administrators. By targeting private sector corporations in this activity, we expect to foster corporate responsibility and initiative for sustainability of the girls' scholarship scheme.

RECOMMEND TARGET AREAS OR SCHOOLS:

The current program runs in twelve states of the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. An additional six states (one from each of the six-geo political zones) will be added to the current twelve participating states, for a new total of eighteen participating states. This will enhance better coverage of the areas with the most girls' education challenges. On an average, there would be about 277 scholarship recipients in each state. The program would encourage girls to stay in school during the scholarship period and beyond through complementary mentoring programs.

POTENTIAL LOCAL PARTNERS CAPABLE OF IMPLEMENTING A SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM TO THE LEVEL PROPOSED:

World Education International
Parent Teachers Associations in all participating schools
Guidance and Counseling Development Institute
Youth Care
Grassroots Development Association
Women's Initiative and Support Services Organization
Youth Resource Development Education and Leadership
Rural Women Foundation
Forward Africa
Anawin Home
Mallam Mamman Foundation
Federation of Muslim Women Association of Nigeria (FOMWAN)
Forum for African Women's Educationalists (FAWEN)
Women's Rights Advancement & Protection Alternative (WRAPA)
Center for Reproductive Health Aromatherapy & Development
Women support Development Initiative
Rural Women's Youth Development
Adolescent Girls Project etc

EXPECTED ROLE OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES:

The local communities are expected to play a supportive role with regard to monitoring the mentoring NGOs,

advocacy for community support, monitoring participating schools, participating in mentoring workshops, participating in selection committees to select girls.

DESCRIBE THE MANNER IN WHICH HIV/AIDS WOULD BE INCORPORATED INTO THE PROGRAM:

In all our programs in the USAID/Nigeria Mission, HIV/AIDS is a cross-cutting theme. The Mission is receiving a \$35m PEPFAR funding for HIV/AIDS work in selected locations in Nigeria. HIV/AIDS would be incorporated into this program by training the mentors on HIV/AIDS and related issues, with the expectation that the mentors will provide step-down training for the girls as part of the life skills training. The current HIV/AIDS program of the Mission will also find ways of reaching the beneficiary schools with HIV/AIDS Interventions, and share IEC materials with schools.

DESCRIBE THE SCOPE OR ACTIVITIES OF AN ANNUAL MENTORING PLAN:

The mentoring program is a complementary program that would be developed with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community based organizations (CBOs), and religious organizations, to encourage the girls to stay in school during the scholarship period and beyond. Mentoring will involve regular visits to the scholarship recipients to encourage the development of good study habits, teach life skill, and present positive role models for the girls. From experience with the current scholarship program, we know that mentors need an opportunity to hone skills (study skills, life skills enhancement, HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention, workforce skills development etc) and to provide feedback on the girls under their charge to the program's administrators. Therefore we will include annual mentoring workshops at the regional level to meet this need.

14. USAID/NIGERIA is supportive of the Ambassadors Girls' Scholarship Program (AGSP), and we look forward to working with AFR/SD in implementing the new program.

CAMPBELL